

Waltham Energy Action Committee

Tuesday 7pm, January 31, 2012

Stonehurst, Robert Treat Paine Estate, Robert Treat Paine Drive

Minutes

Members Present:

Kathy Randel, Leo Keightley, Eileen Zubrowski, Janna Cohen-Rosenthal, Melissa Downs, Councillor Steven Rourke, Tony Dover

Others Present:

Jim Mneice

Emily Starr

Stacy DeGabriele

Allison Mooney

List of attendees:

See attachment "attendees.pdf" for entries from the Forum signup sheet and WEAC personnel.

agenda in [blue](#)

6:30-7:00 Networking and refreshments

7:00 Mayor - Welcome (Stephen if the Mayor has an emergency)

Mayor McCarthy welcomed everyone and thanked WEAC members and volunteers for their work.

- Discussion of various members and City Officials and their history with energy and the City.
- Particular thanks to Pat Fox for starting this Committee.
- Thanks to Kathy for leadership since Pat stepped down.

7:05 Pat Fox - History of WEAC and Overview of What We've Done

Pat described initial City contacts: Eileen Zubrowski (Recycling Coordinator) in particular.

By 2009, Pat, Eileen, and Susan Brown went to Mayor to start an energy committee which would:

- Develop an energy Action Plan for Waltham
- Help the City become Green Committee (or green community)
- Provide guidelines for energy cost reductions

Pat reviewed finding committee members and introduced current members and volunteers:

Jim McNeice, Allison Mooney, Stacy DeGabriele, and Emily Starr

Pat listed many of WEAC's past and current activities and projects.

7:10 Kathy - Green Communities

- Kathy noted the meeting was being recorded by Waltham Cable Access Channel (WCAC).
- Reviewed the 5 criteria for Green Communities (GC) designation.
- Reviewed some of the steps the Subcommittee has taken toward this goal.
- Noted the Stretch Code was adopted by the City Council
- Noted the provision for feedback, due a year after Stretch Code implementation, from WEAC to the Council to describe impact of the Code. The feedback is intended to assist the Council in determining success of the Code and if it should be withdrawn.

- The Mayor is already using the efficiency guidelines developed for Criterion 4 for purchase of new vehicles.
- Noted that State and City were not able to agree on all Criteria in time for the November-'11 application deadline and reviewed the 3 criteria that need more work.
- We Hope to re-apply in May of this year.

Additional forum agenda announcement:

- Kathy introduced Ann Clifford (Curator of Stonehurst) who provided the Estate for this meeting and will later do tour.
- Ann noted that Stonehurst is an appropriate place for this meeting as one of history's examples of sustainability of older buildings providing low tech, efficient solutions to structure requirements for comfort and livability as well as hi tech innovations: Stonehurst was one of first homes with electric lights in country.
- Kathy Introduced Melissa who organized the event.
Melissa noted that WEAC is a new environmentally focused group in Waltham and we will next hear from a few of the older organizations.

7:15 Mel - Introducing the Guest Speakers

Erica Schwarz, WATCH

One of WATCH's programs has provided simple low cost home energy improvements.

- Erica Reviewed Barnraising activities conducted with Cambridge based Home Energy Efficiency Team (HEET).
Audit the building to identify energy problems.
Plan upgrades based on needs identified by the audit.
Assemble volunteers (skilled and not) to execute the plan.
- Reviewed details of latest Barnraising at a (the only) Victorian house on Spruce Street
Reduced energy costs by \$700 to \$800 per year.
Mentioned reductions in water use and CO2 emissions

Kevin Hollenbeck, DCR (Dep Conserv and Recreation)

DCR manages recreation sites

- These sites are local, and available with little to no travel.
- Tents and yurts: examples of shelter options at some locations, are obviously energy efficient.

Waltham Sites:

- The River Walk
Kevin noted that signs indicating closure at dusk refer to "loitering" and travelers (commuters, walkers, runners) may pass through after dark.)
- The Connors Pool
This will be a Net Zero Energy facility. PV and Thermal panels provide electricity and water heat. Rainwater is used for irrigation. This is DCR's first facility of this type.
- Mass Central Rail Trail
The route goes from here (Boston) to North Hampton.
There is already considerable progress on various portions
Currently working on opening the corridor so people can start using it
It is another example of a low cost and low energy site

Sonja Wadman, Waltham Land Trust

- Sonja read the Land Trust's recently revised (Aug-'11) mission statement, noting that this is the first revision of that Statement since the organization's incorporation in 1999).
- Sonja focused on efforts involving the Western Greenway: eventually a 20 mile loop which passes through portions of Waltham, Lexington, and Belmont.

This is a "non motorized" trail.

RailTrail Sewardship is a Land Trust program to provide a team of stewards to maintain the trail.

- Mentioned various programs they are working on with other organizations.
- The Land Trust works to save open spaces in the City of Waltham.

Bob Ferrone, Waltham Chamber of Commerce Sustainability Committee

- Bob Recognized John Peacock and Pat Sullivan in starting the Sustainability Committee
- Stressed the importance of Energy and Water
- The Sustainability Committee will develop programs having economic, social, and environmental elements. A pilot program is starting now.
- Noted the importance of Universities

7:45 Open Discussion-What's your vision for an energy efficient Waltham in 2022? - led by Mel and Kathy

Opening statement: "We will be using less energy in 2022. What things will be changing?"

- John Allen: mentioned opportunities for pathways for bicycles (and pedestrians).
Poloroid Property
A section of old county road west of Rt. 128.
Proposed developing programs with schools on bicycle use and maintenance.
- Dee Cricker said the Chamber of Commerce has plenty that can be done involving business properties. She noted irrigation water waste (sprinkling during and just after rain) and use of fertilizers and chemicals.
- Councillor (and WEAC member) Stephen Rourke stressed the importance of barnraisings and doing more of them. He also brought up the question of how to address rental housing for barnraising.
- Eileen: Barnraising: We need thoughts on how to raise money for these programs.
- Phil Jutras brought up the GETI organization servicing people who have lost jobs has placed people in green sector. He said the Chamber of Commerce could promote hiring people to do energy management at businesses.
- Rick Ochess (Bently) identified the need to expand public transportation (not reduce it) especially in places not well served, including schools. This will improve accessibility of Waltham for the entire school population and help get cars off the roads.
- Bob Ferrone suggested people look at what has been done in the Tufts University Community: Tufts, Government, and the Business Community worked on the transportation issue.
- Councillor Logan Mentioned the City Council 's Resolution condemning MBTA bus service cutbacks and fare increases. There will be a related meeting on Thursday, March 1st at Govt. Center, 6PM - 8PM. MBTA service reductions will just put more cars on the road.
- An attendee from Brandeis mentioned the "Weatherize DC" "Neighborhood Project" model which adds economies of scale in effort and purchasing to the benefits of weatherization.
- Mayor McCarthy recognized three City and State officials attending the meeting:
Waltham Environmental Committee:
Environmental Specialist: Sheryl Waddick

Emergency Management Director: Bernie Mullin

State Representative and City Councillor Thomas Stanley

- There was discussion of utilizing the potential energy at the Moody Street Charles River dam for hydroelectric generation. The Mayor mentioned that two plans have been proposed in the past few years, but not approved.
- Jim Mneice acknowledged that hydroelectric generation does run at night, but he would like to see hundreds of homes using photovoltaic (solar electric) generation.
- Guy Compagnone wanted to hear more of what's going on with the Stretch Code. Kathy Randel noted that the measure had been approved and will be effective in July of this year. She also mentioned that after a year WEAC will provide feedback to the City Council on its impact.
- It was noted that there is a study done by Cambridge on Stretch Code implementation. Guy suggested we document a few case studies showing savings.
- Marc Rudnick suggested that the City do study of traffic signals focusing on energy. Specifically, Marc pointed out that even in times of very low traffic, due to lack of timing coordination between the signals, an vehicle will have to stop at close to all intersections on a single road thus wasting energy braking and idling. The Mayor mentioned energy saving LED lights installed in most signals. It was noted that another energy savings accomplished has been the removal of prohibition of right on red.
- In reference to Jim Mneice's interest in seeing more solar electric installation, Marc also suggested the City, which has used Federal money to popularize weatherization and lead paint removal, consider using similar funds to popularize photovoltaic installation.
- Kathy asked how can we work better together.
 - Guy suggested a community idea-sharing web site of some kind.
 - It was asked if WEAC is on Twitter. WEAC is not, but does maintain a Facebook site. Councillor Logan added that Twitter is a good medium, preferable often to Facebook.
 - A Google Group site was suggested
 - There was an email LISTSERV box to check as people entered this event. we can start there.
 - Kathy asked if we should do something like this (forum) a year from now.
 - We should connect with other towns and look for best practices.
 - Merrimac Valley has made progress with cross functional collaboration.
 - There was discussion along the lines of collaboration (Businesses, schools, organizations, government, etc.).
- Kathy, in wrapping up the discussion, said we should decide where we go immediately. It was agreed we do further communication via the WEAC Google site.

8:30 .. end of discussion.

9:00 Tour of Paine Estate and/or more networking

Due to difficulties in coordinating availability of people stating interest in going on a tour, one did not occur. I (Leo Keightley, WEAC Secretary) did have the opportunity to talk to Ann Clifford about the energy-efficient design elements at Stonehurst. Ann noted the following:

- Stonehurst is a summer home so it is not intended to make efficient use of heating fuels. But it is designed to remain as cool and comfortable in Summer without the use of air conditioning.
 - The structure's South side consists of shaded patio (ground floor) and porch (second floor) to

block the summer sun from these spaces and the South wall of the building.

- The original wooden house, which had been located partway down the Southern slope of the hill, was moved to the current location to take advantage of better breezes near the top. The stone portion of the structure was added at that new location.
- Stones for the addition were obtained locally, saving on transportation costs (and energy use).
- Internal windows and transoms between rooms were included and could be opened to allow breezes to flow through the structure.

Closing

Next Meeting – February 09, 2012 - Public Meeting Room, Government Center, 119 School St.

The committee adjourned at 9:30 PM.